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Author(s): I. Tzvi Abusch

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THE FORM AND MEANING OF A BABYLONIAN PRAYER TO MARDUK

I. TZVI ABUSCH

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

MESOPOTAMIAN HYMNS AND PRAYERS OFTEN EVOKE A response of boredom; more than one reader has found himself wondering whether these texts are not simply collections of phrases that were strung out indiscriminately.¹ Perhaps; still it is no less possible that the sense of meaninglessness and dreariness is due to mechanical reading and presentation. Understanding the artistry and thought of a Babylonian psalm—especially one which represents a new form and thus gives evidence of creativity—underscores the vitality of Mesopotamian psalmody; this study of the poetic form and theological meaning of a well-known and relatively simple prayer, the Marduk šuilla *BMS* 9 obverse and duplicates,² may serve, then, as an appropriate tribute to Professor Samuel Noah Kramer: for

Kramer has sought repeatedly to draw the attention of scholars and general readers alike to the vigor and excitement of Mesopotamian literature.

The composition will be treated as a self-contained unit. First the introductory hymn (1–9) will be explicated, particular attention being paid to some of the techniques used by the composer and the ideas he wished to convey thereby (I). Then several irregularities in the remainder of the text (10–27) will be noted, and the sections (10–12; 22–24) responsible for these irregularities will be studied (II). A consideration of lines 10–12 and 22–24 suggests the possibility that the composition is arranged concentrically. This possibility is examined: the central prayer (13–21) is analyzed, the relation of lines 13–21 to 10–12 and 22–24 explored, and the introductory hymn and concluding benediction drawn together. The structure of the text is presented in diagram form (III). An historical observation concludes the discussion.

I. The šuilla begins with a hymn of praise to Marduk:

1. *gašru šūpū etel Eridug*
2. *rubū tizqāru bukur* ^dNudimmud
3. ^dMarduk *šalbābu murīš E^ṣengura*
4. *bēl Esagila tukulti Bābili*
5. *rā^ṣim Ezida mušallim napišti*
6. *ašarēd Emaḫtila mudeššū balāṭi*
7. *šulūl māti gāmil ništ rapšāti*
8. *ušumgal kališ parakkī*
9. *šumka kališ ina pī ništ ṭāb*

These nine lines³ constitute a distinct unit. The unit opens with the invocation *gašru šūpū etel Eridug* (1)

¹ Cf. W. W. Hallo, *JAOS* 97 (1977), 582–85 (review of M.-J. Seux, *Hymnes et prières aux dieux de Babylonie et d'Assyrie*), esp. 582f.

² This šuilla is cited as Marduk no. 2 in the lists of šuillas compiled by W. Kunstmann, *Die babylonische Gebetsbeschwörung* (LSS nf 2), 94 and Werner Mayer, *Untersuchungen zur Formensprache der babylonischen "Gebetsbeschwörungen"* (Studia Pohl: Series Maior 5), 395. For a list of exemplars and other bibliographical information, see Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 395; the unpublished British Museum duplicates listed there have since appeared in copy in O. Loretz and W. R. Mayer, *SU-ILA-Gebete* (AOAT 34), nos. 26–29. This šuilla was known by its opening line: *gašru šūpū etel* (var. *etelli*) *Eridu*. This incipit is cited in l. 11 of the list K. 2832 + 6680 col. I (W. L. King, *Babylonian Magic and Sorcery*, p. xix and Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 399) and follows there immediately upon the entry: *gašru šūpū ilitti Eridu* (9). Kunstmann, *Gebetsbeschwörung*, 95, and Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 399, take l. 9 as referring to an otherwise unattested or unidentified prayer (Kunstmann: Marduk 7; Mayer: Marduk (?) X). However, since one MS of Marduk no. 2 (Loretz and Mayer, *SU-ILA*, nos. 28 (+) 29:3') preserves the reading *gašru šūpū ilitti Eridu* (the better reading is *etelli*; *ilitti* is due to an auditory error which resulted in metathesis: *etelli* → *ilitti*), the incipit *gašru šūpū ilitti Eridu* in

K. 2832 + 6680 l. 9 may simply refer to a version of Marduk no. 2 that had *ilitti* instead of *etelli* in its opening line. If such is indeed the case, it might explain why the scribe of K. 2832 + 6680 associated the two incipits and entered them together.

³ The division into nine lines is supported by almost all MSS. On two points do we encounter variation: l. 8 is joined

and ends with the statement *šumka kališ ina pī nišī ṭāb* (9). To be sure, l. 10 also contains an invocation: *Marduk bēlu rabū*; but this invocation recurs in l. 22. It is the opening of a summary statement (10–12; 22–24) recited once between the introductory hymn (1–9) and the prayer and again between the prayer and the concluding benediction.⁴ L. 10, then, begins a new section and is not part of the introductory hymn. Besides, l. 9 is itself bound up with what immediately precedes it. Ll. 8 and 9 are bound together by their content:

The single great one of chapels everywhere,
Your name is lovingly hymned by the people
everywhere.

They are bound even more closely by their sound; note the alliteration of the first two words of 8 and of 9: *ušumgal kališ* . . . ; *šumka kališ*. . . And we may even wonder whether the play does not extend backwards from *ušumgal* of l. 8 to *gāmil* of l. 7. It is possible, moreover, that the boundaries of the hymn are signalled by its first and last lines:

gašru šūpū etel Eridug (1)
šumka kališ ina pī nišī ṭāb (9)

gašru at the beginning of l. 1 and *šumka* at the beginning of l. 9 call to mind *gašru* at the beginning and *gašru lū šumka* at the end of the speech to enlist aid in Anzu.⁵ Furthermore, the occurrence of Eridug⁶

at the end of l. 1 and of *nišī ṭāb* at the end of l. 9 appears to be more than just a coincidence: *dūg* and *ṭāb* are, respectively, the Sumerian and Akkadian words for “good”; *eri*, “city,” and *nišī*, “people,” encapsulate the two poles of Marduk’s activities in the poem: in the first stanza the focus is on the city of his youth, and in the third stanza it is on the people for whom he cares and who admire him in his maturity. Other Sumero-Akkadian wordplays in the hymn⁷ lend credence to this observation. However, we need not belabor these uncertain boundary markers, for the definition and unity of the hymn are rendered sufficiently clear by the thematic makeup and structure of ll. 1–9.

The hymn comprises nine poetic lines. These nine lines are to be arranged into three-line stanzas;⁸ the basic unit is the triplet.

- I. Famed mighty one, chieftain of Eridu,
Exalted prince, first-born of Nudimmud,
Raging Marduk, restorer of rejoicing to
E²engura.
- II. Lord of Esaḡila, hope of Babylon,
Lover of Ezida, preserver of life,
Lone one of Emaḡtila, multiplier of living.
- III. Protection of the land, savior of the multi-
tudes of people,
The single great one of chapels everywhere,
Your name is sweetly hymned by the people
everywhere.

Each stanza conveys a picture of Marduk. Each picture is full-blown and self-contained, and yet each differs from the others. Marduk’s actions and concerns, the groups with which he interacts, and the areas in which he operates change from one stanza to the next. But the hymn is not a series of disjointed images. It retains a sense of constancy while portraying a changing figure. This is all the more impressive in view of the brevity of the hymn and the static form of description. The hymn integrates a series of different pictures and tells a story of the expansion of the activities and concerns of a single god. Earlier roles presage later ones; later roles do not require the

with l. 9 in *STT* I 55 and with l. 7 in the *bīt mēseri* version IV R² 21* no. 1(c)rev. (= G. Meier, *AfO* 14 [1941–44], 140–43); this is due to the brevity of l. 8. More significant, IV R² 21* splits up l. 5 and joins 5a with 4 and 5b with 6. Besides destroying the parallelism of ll. 4, 5, and 6, this division obscures the scholastic wordplays upon which our text turns (see below). One must assume that the scribe of IV R² 21* was unaware of, or had no regard for, the devices used to convey the meaning and was more concerned with compressing the text into a smaller number of lines. It is unfortunate that the line division of IV R² 21* has been perpetuated by *BMS* 9 obv., F. Delitzsch, *Assyrische Lesestücke*⁵, 85, and K. K. Riemschneider, *Lehrbuch des Akkadischen*, 155f.

⁴ For this characterization of ll. 10–12 and 22–24, see below, section II.

⁵ For Anzu, see J. S. Cooper, *JAOS* 97 (1977), 508–11 (example A); W. W. Hallo and W. L. Moran, *JCS* 31 (1979), 82–87, ll. 37–44, 58–65, and 79–86.

⁶ See Th. Jacobsen, *JCS* 21 (1967), 162 n. 14 for a discussion of the form and meaning of the name “Eridug.” It is

of no consequence for our interpretation of *BMS* 9 whether “the good city” is the original meaning of the name or the result of ancient etymologizing.

⁷ See below.

⁸ For a different stanza arrangement, see A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete*, 297f.

rejection of earlier ones; rather, they incorporate and expand on them.

To understand how the composer has achieved his goal, we must take note of the picture and thought of each stanza, see some of the ways in which the stanzas are joined together, and try to imagine the progression of images and the overarching conception of the hymn.

In the first stanza Marduk is presented as a young aristocrat residing in his parents' estate and acting on their behalf. He is a warrior-prince, a well-endowed son who is accorded social prerogatives and placed under filial obligations. He performs heroically in the service of his family; still, he remains a local figure. He serves his family within the confines of his ancestral town and home. Yet the way forth is prepared by his role as *murīš E'engura* (3). The third stanza presents a very different scene: here Marduk is the supreme god. He takes care of the land and its people and is rewarded for his care. The first and third stanzas seem to clash. But for all their differences, they also balance and parallel each other. Both operate within the bounds of the concrete. The first describes Marduk's place in a specific city, family, and temple; the third describes Marduk's relation to the land, its people, and its sanctuaries.⁹ All the same, the universalism of the third stanza contrasts with the particularism of the first, and Marduk's domination of the country in the third contrasts with his dependent status in the first.

The third stanza is obviously an outgrowth and widening of the first one. But how was the transition achieved? The connecting piece is provided by ll. 4–6: this stanza constitutes the pivot of the text; it draws the first and third stanzas together and creates a whole. In the second stanza, Marduk is presented as the god of Babylon and its environs. The role of lord of Babylon, *Esağila*, *Ezida*, and *Emaḥtila* forms a crucial episode in his life. It fits nicely between his role in the first stanza as the young god of Eridu and his role in the third as supreme god of the land. This does not exhaust the meaning and function of the second stanza: this stanza gives the hymn a distinct slant. But to understand the stanza and its place in the poem, we must first take note of a series of anomalies in ll. 4–6 and explain them. The stanza reads:

4. *bēl Esağila tukulti Bābili*
5. *rā'im Ezida mušallim napišti*
6. *ašarēd Emaḥtila mudeššū balāṭi*

The epithets are standard enough; yet the sequence and conjunction are striking and unexpected. It is sufficient to take note of a similar section of a Nabû šuilla to appreciate our own stanza:

14. *ašarēd Bābili rā'im Esağila*
15. *šulūl Barsip tukulti Ezida*
16. *šā'imū šīmāti mušallim napišti*
17. *murrik ūmī qā'išu balāṭi*¹⁰

This address to Nabû shares many elements with our stanza but orders them in a more conventional way: Epithets describing the god's relation to city and temple are joined together and appear in the order city-temple (14–15); these epithets are followed by epithets describing the god's relation to human life (16–17). These two distinct sets of epithets are presented separately and are not mixed together. Turning back to our own stanza, we now note the following: Line 4: The expected and logical procedure would have been to mention first the city Babylon and then the temple *Esağila*. Certainly the first stanza has prepared us for the order city-temple by presenting Marduk first as *etel Eridu* and then as *murīš E'engura*. Instead, l. 4 presents Marduk first as *bēl Esağila* and only then as *tukulti Bābili*. Lines 5–6: Coming to these lines from l. 4, we notice immediately the absence of a city name. Moreover it would have been more usual and natural for the two epithets describing the god's relation to temples of Borsippa to be joined together in one line and the two describing his relation to human life to be joined together in another. Instead, the sets of epithets are split up, and epithets describing his relation to temples in Borsippa are juxtaposed to those describing his care for human life.

Far from being mere hackwork, the second stanza is tightly knit and ingeniously constructed. The order is intentional and expresses the central notion of the hymn. The purpose of the stanza is not simply to depict Marduk as the lord of Babylon. Even more it serves as a transition and provides the vehicle for Marduk's development from the local god of Eridu into the supreme caretaker of mankind, and it does so

⁹ More specifically, note the city in l. 1, the country in l. 7; elevated princely status in l. 2, elevated divine station in l. 8; the applause of the family in l. 3, the applause of all people in l. 9.

¹⁰ E. Ebeling, *Die akkadische Gebetsserie "Handerhebung"*, 110:14–17.

by expressing a thought basic to the composer's theology and art: the god's place in the temple is intimately related to his ability to care for the people; his power to care for human life derives from his rootedness in the temple. The connection between the god's relation to temple and his relation to people is expressed first of all by the juxtaposition of temple and mankind:

Lover of Ezida, preserver of life,
Lone one of Emaḥtila, multiplier of living.

The two are thus put on a par. But the connection is more than just mechanical. There is an internal, organic connection, and here a mere scholastic play serves to draw together god, temple, and man. The composer relies on a knowledge of the equations *zi* : *napištu* and *ti.la* : *balātu* to convey his meaning. Here, far from being an orthographic convention that obscures the Akkadian text, the use of Sumerograms is a literary device meant to express or, at least, enhance the composer's message.¹¹ *napišti* translates and is written in all but one manuscript with *zi*¹² and plays on the temple name, "Ezida," a name translated elsewhere as *bīt napišti māti*.¹³ *balāti* translates and is written in almost all manuscripts with *ti.la*¹⁴ and plays on the temple name, "Emaḥtila."¹⁵ Thus in l. 5 Ezida shares *zi* with *napišti* and in l. 6 Emaḥtila shares *ti.la* with *balāti*:

¹¹ The literary use of ideograms might suggest a written—rather than an oral—form of composition. Note, however, that a learned composer could certainly see and exploit the connection between Ezida and *napištu* and between Emaḥtila and *balātu* without recourse to writing. If this šuilla was originally composed orally, the scribe who introduced the writing *zi* for *napišti* in l. 5 and *ti.la* for *balāti* in l. 6 is to be credited with preserving and rendering explicit the aforementioned connections.

¹² + *ti/ti*; *STT* I 55: *na-pišt-ti*.

¹³ For this translation, see *RLA* I 188; cf. Ebeling, *AGH*, 124:8: *zēr Ezida bīt šikin napišti ša ilī rabūti*.

¹⁴ The exceptions are Loretz and Mayer, *SU-ILA*, no. 26: *TIN* and *KAR* 59: *ba-l[a²-ti]*.

¹⁵ While completing this study, I located E. Lehmann and H. Haas (eds.), *Textbuch zur Religionsgeschichte*² (1922), and noted that whereas in the 1912 edition (101f.) Landsberger had apparently not noticed any wordplays, in the 1922 edition (307f.), he comments on 6b: "Anspielungen auf die vorangehenden Tempelnamen" (307 n. 7).

rā'im Ezida mušallim napišti (zi[D])
*ašarēd Emaḥtila mudeššū balāti (ti.la)*¹⁶

The placing of the temple name in first position in ll. 5 and 6 explains furthermore the order of l. 4: *bēl Esaḡila tukulti Bābili*.¹⁷ Esaḡila is placed before

¹⁶ The use of Sumerio-Akkadian equations as a poetic device and as a way of expressing thought is not particularly surprising in this hymn; the composer seems to have been acquainted with bilingual literature. Note, for example, that whereas the combination Babylon, Esaḡila, Ezida, and Emaḥtila in our text is relatively uncommon in Akkadian prayers, it occurs with greater frequency in Sumerian and bilingual liturgies: See, for example, the Sumerian Marduk šuilla J. S. Cooper, *Iraq* 32 (1970), 58f.: 5–8 (disregard the additions of the Nabû adaptation MS D) and the Marduk Kiutukam IV *R*² 29/1 obv. 27–30 // *STT* II 182 (+) 183 obv. 6f: *lugal tin.tir.ki lugal é.saḡ.il.la : šar (STT: [x]x) ba-bi-li (STT: KÁ.DI[NGIR.RA.KI]) be-el é-saḡ-ila; lugal é.zi.da lugal é.maḥ.ti.la : šar (STT: xx) é-zi-da be-el é-maḥ-ti-la*. Babylon - Esaḡila - Ezida - Emaḥtila formed the original kernel out of which was constructed the expanded and convoluted Babylon section (Babylon, Esaḡila, Borsippa, Ezida, Emaḥtila, Etemenanki, Edaranna) of such eršemmas and balags as M. E. Cohen, *Sumerian Hymnology: The Eršemma* (HUCA suppl. 2), 29:7–13; 118b:8–14; 127:12–18; 113f:21–25 (= R. Kutscher, *Oh Angry Sea* [YNER 6], 63: 26–30 [Kutscher's MS Haa = Cohen's MS B]). Eturkalama in l. 27 between Esaḡila and Borsippa must be misplaced; elsewhere, it occurs before Babylon [e.g., Cohen, *Eršemma*, 133:37; 144:22; 147:17; 148:21], M. E. Cohen, *Balag-Compositions* (SANE 1/2), 18:88–92; 19:134–38; 30:17–21 (cf. S. Langdon, *Sumerian and Babylonian Psalms*, 104, 108, 120). In these lists, Borsippa introduces Ezida and Emaḥtila; it is set on a level with Babylon and introduces its temples as Babylon introduces Esaḡila. The secondary nature of this longer list is suggested by the separation of the Babylonian Etemenanki and Edaranna from Esaḡila and their citation after Ezida and Emaḥtila, by the joining together of Esaḡila and Borsippa in one line in the Balags cited above (Babylon // Esaḡila - Borsippa // Ezida - Emaḥtila, etc.), and by such adaptations as Cooper, *Iraq* 32, 58 MS D, which attest directly to the insertion of Borsippa (6a) between Esaḡila (6) and Ezida - Emaḥtila (7f.).

¹⁷ I do not wish to imply that the order Esaḡila - Bābili is found only in this hymn; see simply Ebeling, *AGH*, 68:5f: *šarrat Esaḡila . . . bēlet Bābili . . .*, and 54:3 // 112a4: *Esaḡila liḥdūka Bābili liriška* (corrected reading: Seux, *Hymnes*, 304 and n. 26 and Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 336 1c). The first example is addressed to Zarpanītu and is found on

Babylon in order to open the stanza with a line beginning with a temple, a stratagem facilitated by the mention of the temple E²engura at the end of l. 3. By placing the temple first and the city second in l. 4, the composer both provides a precedent for beginning ll. 5–6 with a temple-name, as well as cushions the shock of these lines, for not only do ll. 5–6 begin with temples, but they also replace references to cities with references to mankind.

The second stanza presents an important episode in the life of Marduk and sets forth a period of growth and transition. It plays a special role in the poem. It links the first and third stanzas and creates a unity. The first stanza leads into it; the third emerges out of it. The second stanza is a center: it draws the text to itself and then sets in motion the progressive loosening of tightly-knit connections. The tightening and loosening, the narrowing and widening come to expression not only in the choice and order of themes but also in the choice and order of metrical and grammatical units. These forms arrange themselves into concentric patterns with the second stanza forming the center. A primitive count of the number of syllables in each stanza indicates that whereas the first and third stanzas contain approximately the same number of syllables: ca. 30, the second has a different number: ca. 35. This pattern sets off the second stanza by giving it special marking and balances the first and third stanzas. On a grammatical level, too, we find a marking off of stanzas. But the grammatical structure does more; it is more flexible and therefore able to convey the meaning of the text. The grammatical units form a concentric pattern. The second stanza is more tightly drawn than the first and third, and it forms a center. The first is relatively loose at the beginning; it tightens up and becomes more particular as it approaches and links up with the second. The third becomes looser and less particular as it moves away from the second, until at the end it is looser and more general even than the first line of the poem. A diagram of the text demonstrates this point. A characterization of the syntactic structures encountered in the hymn should make clear our interpretation: a construct chain is the tightest form of linking two words; a noun plus attributive adjective is a looser

form; a sentence with an adjective in predicate position is the loosest form. A proper noun is the most particularizing substantive; a general noun is less particularizing; an adjective is the least particularizing. The grammatical scheme is as follows:

Stanza I	1a nominalized adjective + adjective	1b construct chain
	2a general noun + adjective	2b construct chain
	3a proper noun + adjective	3b construct chain
Stanza II	4a construct chain	4b construct chain
	5a construct chain	5b construct chain
	6a construct chain	6b construct chain
Stanza III	7a construct chain	7b construct chain
		augmented by adjective modifying
		2nd member of chain, "nišī"
	8	construct chain expanded by a second bound form, "kališ," before <i>rectum</i>
	9	stative sentence composed of nominal subject and adjectival predicate, separated by adverb, "kališ," and prepositional phrase (preposition + construct chain whose 2nd member is "nišī")

The last line is the only real sentence; it is the most expansive form in the hymn and describes the delights of praising the god, thus stating the essence of a hymn: *šumka kališ ina pī nišī īāb*.

We have witnessed the loosening of Marduk's local ties and the widening of his orbit, his change from a local to a national god, from a god who serves his divine parents to one who cares for the people of the land. We watch the broadening of Marduk's scope and note that the composer has managed to preserve the god's connections with the concrete. A desirable and even necessary achievement: while extending his care to more and more people, Marduk must remain rooted, for only thus can he remain the master of his home, the object of a cult, and the possessor of the power to help people. But seeing all this only makes us more aware of the difficulties that faced the poet. To describe a god's growth and not to let go of the link between the god and the concrete world and to manage even to extend the god's links are not easy tasks. For our poet the difficulty was if possible even greater. Locality, temple, and community were connected in the first stanza; but locality then served as a stepping stone to the temple and receded into the distance. Temple then served as a stepping stone for reaching the people and then began slipping away.

the reverse of *BMS* 9; the second is part of the concluding benediction of the prayer to Nabû from whose introduction we cited an example of the more usual order! For Marduk, see G. Wilhelm, *ZA* 69 (1979), 39: *ina qibīt^a Marduk āšib Ešāgila u Bābili*.

The second stanza asserted that temple and human life were connected but conveyed this thought by means of an interlocking structure which could easily fly apart. The third stanza provides a climax and the poet's solution: the first stanza emphasized city and temple; the second, temple and human life; the third stanza serves both to broaden Marduk's focus of concern and action as well as to bring together again locality, temple, and human community—but this time on a higher level of generalization: Marduk is the supreme god; he takes care of the land and its people and is rewarded for this care. This is expressed clearly in the wording and structure of this last stanza. L. 7 is composed of two distinct halves and these two parallel each other:

7a. <i>ṣulūl māti</i>	Protection of the land,
7b. <i>gāmil nišī rapšāti</i>	Savior of the multitudes of people.

Ll. 8 and 9, for their part, also parallel each other:

8. <i>ušumgal kališ</i> <i>parakkī</i>	The single great one of chapels everywhere,
9. <i>šumka kališ ina pī</i> <i>nišī ṭāb</i>	Your name is sweetly hymned by the people everywhere.

What draws the stanza together and brings together the loose pieces of the poem is the relationship of l. 7 to ll. 8 and 9: each half of l. 7 stands in direct relation to one of the two following lines: 7a to 8, 7b to 9; he who covers the land (7a *ṣulūl māti*) attains dominion over all chapels therein (8 *ušumgal kališ parakkī*); he who saves the widespread people (7b *gāmil nišī rapšāti*) is joyfully praised by the people everywhere (9 *šumka kališ ina pī nišī ṭāb*).

Marduk is the shelter of the land and protector of the people; as his due for being caretaker of the land, he becomes the single great one of chapels everywhere; as his due for being the protector of the people, his name is lovingly hymned by people everywhere. A climax worthy of Marduk. Instead of living in only one temple and being a subordinate member of a group of gods, he has become master of all sanctuaries and the object of praise of diverse human constituencies. Marduk has changed, but always the new has been drawn back into an original if constantly widening circle of places, temples, and communities. True, he has had to extend his care to the whole land and to more and more people. The power to care derives from his place in the temple; but his desire to

care may be motivated by the knowledge that in this way he will acquire more chapels and more veneration. In any case, Marduk has been provided with the elements that comprise the identity of a national god: land, people, residences, and service. One may even consider the possibility that what Marduk is to the gods in *Enūma Eliš*, he is to mankind in our hymn. But then there is the expected reversal: in *Enūma Eliš*, the gods receive *parakkus* in Babylon; in our hymn Marduk receives *parakkus* all over the land. He has been transformed into a great god who grants life and receives homage in return. And this thought, we shall see, is not restricted to the hymnic introduction; it is taken up and developed in later sections of the prayer.

II. In explicating the hymn, we discerned thematic and formal levels of expression and saw how the composer merged the various modes of expression to convey meaning. Not surprisingly, his art and thought extend beyond the hymn; especially in its later portions, the composition shows a number of innovations and forms a new structure.

Following the hymnic introduction, the remainder of the *šuilla* reads:¹⁸

10. *dMarduk bēlu rabū (ilu rēmēnū →) ∅*

11. *ina qibītika (kitti → kabitti →) širti lubluṭ
lušlimma*

¹⁸ Phonetic variations and standard *attalû*-insertions (*BMS* 54:1'-4'; *PBS* 1/2 108 obv. 1'-8', Loretz and Mayer, *SU-ILA*, no. 27 obv. 11-14) are ignored. The few variants that require mention in the context of the present study are included in the transcription and discussed at appropriate places below. Contrary to the impression given by some editions, manuscripts are often internally consistent in their treatment of case endings; others represent definite stages of transition. I follow the MSS that have merged sing. nominative and accusative and have retained a separate genitive; the forms *qabā* and *šemā* are found even in those MSS that read *magāru* (*STT* 1 55, *KAR* 23 + 25, *PBS* 1/2 108). The claim that "in the literary dialect these CVC signs [*i.e.*, CVM] are used only for forms in which the /m/ ending is historically correct" (E. Reiner, *A Linguistic Analysis of Akkadian*, 60) requires modification in light of such writings as *SIG₅-TIM* (*KAR* 59) / *MÍ.SIG₅-TIM* (*KAR* 23 + 25) for *damiqtī* (accus. + 1. sing. poss. suff.; cf. *SIG₅-MU* [*STT* 1 55]) in l. 16 and *ZI-TIM* (*BMS* 9, *PBS* 1/2 108) for *napištī* (accus. + 1. sing. poss. suff.) in l. 22; cf. *ZI-TIM-ia* (*BMS* 9) / *ZI-TIM-MU* (*PBS* 1/2 108) for *napištiya* (genit. + 1. sing. poss. suff.; cf. *na-piš-ti-ia* [*KAR* 23 + 25], *ZI-ti-ia* [*STT* 1 55], *ZI-ia* [*IV R² 21**]) in l. 23.

12. *luštammar ilūtkā*
13. *ēma ušammaru lukšud*
14. *šuškin kittu ina pīya*
15. *šubši amāt damiqti ina libbiya*
16. *tīru u nanzāzu liqbū damiqti*
17. *ilī lizziz ina imniya*
18. *ištārī lizziz ina šumēliya*
19. *ilu mušallimu idāya / ina idīya lū kayān*
20. *šurkamma qabā šemā u magāru*
21. *amāt aqabbū (kīma →) ēma aqabbū lū magrat*
22. ^d*Marduk bēlu rabū napištī qīša*
23. *balāṭ napištiya qibi*
24. *maḥarka namriš atalluka lušbi*
25. ^d*Enlil liḥdūka* ^d*Ea liriška*
26. *ilū ša kiššati likrubūka*
27. *ilū rabūtu libbaka liḥbū*

The text deviates from the norm and in so doing poses some difficulties of interpretation. The normal structure of a šuilla is a) introduction: hymn, b) body: prayer, c) conclusion: promise of thanksgiving or divine benediction.¹⁹ In the main, our šuilla follows this form: it contains an introductory hymn (1–9), a prayer (13–21), and a concluding benediction (25–27). However, some elements are repeated and do not appear where expected. Thus in addition to the hymn, prayer, and benediction, the text also contains two other invocations (10; 22a), two other prayers (11; 22b–23), and two other concluding promises of thanksgiving or service (12²⁰; 24). And the arrangement of these duplicate elements seems to give the text a somewhat confused and disjointed appearance: the second invocation (22a) appears after the main prayer and is separated from the hymnic introduction (1–9) and the first invocation (10);²¹ the prayer in ll. 13–21 is separated from the prayer in l. 11 by a promise (12) and from the prayer in ll. 22b–23 by an invocation (22a); the first promise (12) appears surprisingly before the main prayer (13–21) and is separated from the second promise (24) and final benediction (25–27).²² Furthermore, the prayer in ll. 13–21 seems to differ in

tone and purpose from the prayer in ll. 11 and 22b–23; ll. 13–21 present a request for success; ll. 11 and 22b–23 contain the request for life itself. Even on formal grounds, the prayer in ll. 13–21 is set off from preceding and following sections. It begins and ends with a similar theme and identical words—*ēma ušammaru lukšud . . . amāt aqabbū ēma* (→*kīma*) *aqabbū lū magrat*; these lines thus form a border and mark the outer limits of the segment.

Noting seemingly divergent themes and structural irregularities may on occasion lead to the identification of a new pattern. Such is the case here. The difficulties are the result of innovation. Although the text deviates from the usual liturgical pattern, it does not lack a meaningful order. We have here a new form, the recognition of which resolves the very difficulties which led to its recognition. Examining the list of difficulties, we note that the source of the formal and thematic incongruities is located in ll. 10–12 and 22–24. This is hardly fortuitous. Each of these sections constitutes a capsulated šuilla, and the two sections parallel each other to the extent even of playing on the same words and sharing identical forms:

Invocation:	10 22a
^d <i>Marduk bēlu rabū (ilu</i> ^d <i>Marduk bēlu rabū</i>	
<i>rēmēnū)</i>	
Prayer for Life:	11 22b–23
<i>ina qibītika kitti</i> ²³ <i>lubluṭ</i> <i>napištī qīša, balāṭ</i>	
<i>lušlimma</i> <i>napištiya qibi</i>	
Promise of Service:	12 24
<i>luštammar ilūtkā</i> <i>maḥarka namriš</i>	
	<i>atalluka lušbi</i>

²³ On grounds of usage, *kitti* and *širti* are to be preferred over *kabitti*. On the whole, *kitti* appears to be the original reading: a) whereas *ka-bit-ti* (IV R² 21*) and *šir-ti* (BMS 9) are found only in Nineveh, *kit-ti* is found in MSS from Babylonia (PBS I/2 108; Loretz and Mayer, *ŠU-ILA*, no. 26: *kit-tū*), Aššur (KAR 59; KAR 23 + 25: *kit-[ti]*), Sultantepe (STT I 55), and Nineveh (BMS 54). b) It is easier to explain the development of *kabitti* from *kitti* than from *širti*. Limiting ourselves to simple linear models, we suggest the development 1. *kitti* → 2. *kabitti* → 3. *širti*: 1) *kitti* is chosen perhaps under the influence of *kittu* in l. 14. 2) *kit-ti* → *ka-bit-ti*: we note a) *qibītika* is written in several ways in our MSS including *qī-bīti-ka* (KAR 23 + 25: [q]i-bīti-ka; STT I 55: [qī]-bīti-ka). The signs KIT and BIT are similar and can be identical in NB; and b) *ka* of *kabitti* is easily explained as a dittography of the suffix *-ka* of *qibīti-ka*. Accordingly, the

¹⁹ See Kunstmann, *Gebetsbeschwörung*, 7–42.

²⁰ The occasional occurrence of a thanksgiving-formula in a prayer that concludes with a benediction is noted and l. 12 cited by Kunstmann, *Gebetsbeschwörung*, 40 and n. 4; cf. Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 331 and n. 42 and 347f.

²¹ The first invocation (10) is not cited here because it follows immediately upon the hymn.

²² The second promise (24) is not cited here because it immediately precedes the benediction.

Each set of consecutive lines constitutes a summary statement. These statements, moreover, form discrete units and are set off from the introductory hymn and concluding benediction, on the one side, and the core prayer on the other. The structure of the text seems to be:

1–9	I	Introductory Hymn
10–12	A	Capsule Šuilla: a) invocation; b) prayer for life; c) promise
13–21	II	Prayer for Success
22–24	A'	Capsule Šuilla: a') invocation; b') prayer for life; c') promise
25–27	III	Concluding Benediction

What seems to be emerging is a different šuilla design, a design created by the inclusion of two related summary statements of invocation, prayer, and thanksgiving, the first placed between the hymnic introduction and the prayer, the second between the prayer and the concluding benediction. We may account, then, for the present form of the text by assuming that the (original) prayer (13–21) was (secondarily) framed by two related summary statements.

But having recognized that ll. 10–12 and 22–24 form an envelope construction, we must still ask: Why were these summary statements included? This question gains in significance to the extent that the inclusion constitutes the creation of a new pattern or, at the very least, the use of an unconventional one. It may be easier to find an answer if the question is rephrased: What purpose do the summary statements serve? A partial answer is provided by the observation

that the summary statements repeat the central thought of the hymn—the greatness of Marduk and the reciprocal relationship between the god and mankind. If anything, the summary seems to carry the thought even further; by the very baldness of its formulation, the summary articulates this thought in sharper terms and renders it more explicit than does the hymn itself:

O Marduk great lord,
By your affirmative decree may I live and be well,
I will then constantly praise your godhead
(10–12)

O Marduk great lord,
Grant me my life; decree for me a healthy life,
In joyfully serving you regularly will I then find satisfaction. (22–24)

The summary links up with the hymn; one may even go so far as to state that each set of parallel lines of the summary statements corresponds to one of the three stanzas of the hymn:

Hymn	Summary A	Summary A'
1–3	10	22a the person of Marduk
4–6	11	22b–23 the granting of life (<i>balātu, napištu</i>) by Marduk
7–9	12	24 the praise of Marduk

The summary statements draw together the introductory hymn and the body of the prayer.

III. Lines 10–12 and 22–24 carry forward the thought of the hymn: Marduk is the great god who grants life and receives homage in return. These lines are important for the ideas they convey; they are no less important for the place they occupy in and the effect they have on the composition. They form a circle: on its inner side (12 + 22), this circle surrounds the core prayer—the center of the text (13–21); on its outer side (10 + 24), it runs along the inner border of the introductory hymn (1–9) and of the concluding benediction (25–27). The circle affects the meaning of the parts it touches and forms a bridge between the outer hymn and benediction and the inner prayer, thus drawing the parts of the composition together and creating a circular structure. For once the frame has

development *kitti* → *kabitti* requires only the repetition of *ka* and the misreading of *kit* as *bit*, perhaps under the influence of a preceding BIT: *qī-bīti-ka ka-bīt-ti*. 3) *kabitti* is hypercorrected to *širti*. Note, however, that this reconstruction remains provisional; a final assessment must await the determination of the precise nature and direction of relation between our text and the genetically related Nabû šuilla BMS 22:1–29 and duplicates. Compare the variant readings *ina qibītika kitti/kabitti/širti* of our text with the parallel lines (9f.) of the Nabû text: *ina amātika kitti ina siqrika kabitti ina qibītika rabīti*; if the Marduk composition is dependent on the Nabû one, our variants may reflect the break-up of a *ḗv δῖα τριῶν* and the preservation of its parts in different MSS; if, on the other hand, the Nabû composition is dependent on the Marduk one, the *ḗv δῖα τριῶν* may simply be the result of a conflation of several variants.

been set in place, the text no longer follows a linear design but is arranged concentrically. Ring composition becomes the architectonic principle of the text, and the world of gods and the world of men touch and interact where the movement inward from an outer divine orb and outward from a human center attain equilibrium and meet.

This characterization is in line with observations made in our analysis of the hymn and summary statements. 1. Cohesion and integrity. The hymn and the two summary statements parallel each other and share a common theme. Furthermore, each summary constitutes a miniature *šuilla* (invocation || hymn; prayer || prayer; promise || benediction); by linking up with and recapitulating the crucial parts of the *šuilla*, each summary signals a joining together of the parts of the whole *šuilla* and suggests the notion of unity. 2. Circular structure: the introductory hymn (1–9) follows a concentric pattern. The same pattern obtains in the body of the *šuilla* (10–24) in that the summary statements form a frame around a core prayer (13–21) which itself begins and ends with a similar line (13:21). At this stage of exposition, however, the value of these earlier observations is presumptive not demonstrative. Thus for the above characterization to be more than just an assertion, we must now try to set out the structure in some detail and understand how it gives direction to the movement of ideas and shapes new images. We start at the center and work our way outwards. We begin by asking what is achieved by the innovative technique of constructing a frame and setting the core prayer within it. This question may be answered by forming some impression of the core prayer as an independent entity and then noticing the nature and consequence of the interaction of core and frame.

In ll. 13–21, the petitioner sets out his requests:

13. Whatsoever I seek may I attain,
14. Ordain (the response) 'done!' to my speech,
15. Fashion (the response) 'agreed!' to my thought,
16. May courtier and attendant seek agreement on my behalf,
17. May my god stand at my right,
18. May my goddess stand at my left,
19. May the guardian-deity be constantly at my side,
20. Grant me (the power) to speak, to be heard, and to meet with consent (so that)

21. Whatsoever words I utter may meet with consent.

Though not ordered sequentially, his wishes form more than just a random list of requests. The common concern is achievement and success. This text-segment conveys a picture of effective behavior, a picture which possesses scenic (though not yet dramatic) coherence. To what shall we ascribe the coherence? Certainly the existence of a common theme contributes to the creation of a structured scene, but if there were nothing more than this common theme, the text would probably just ramble and give the impression of discontinuity. Thus alongside a common theme there must be a structural principle giving form to the segment. The occurrence of a frame (10–12; 22–24) around the section, the similarity of the first and last lines (13:21) and their possession of features found nowhere else in the segment²⁴ suggest that even if there is a linear stanza arrangement we also have a concentric structure.

Support for seeing a concentric arrangement in our text is provided by the observation that ancient readers also seem to have understood the text in this way. This is suggested by two variants: line 10: ^d*Marduk bēlu rabû ilu rēmēnû* is read by all mss except the *bīt mēseri* text IV R² 21*, which deletes *ilu rēmēnû*; line 21: *amāt aqabbû kīma aqabbû* is read by all mss except IV R² 21* and Loretz and Mayer, *SU-ILA*, no. 26, which replaces *kīma* with *ēma*. The minority readings ^d*Marduk bēlu rabû* and *amāt aqabbû ēma aqabbû* are secondary. They reflect an attempt to harmonize, and thereby emphasize the relation of, the parallel lines 10 || 22a and 13 || 21: by the deletion of *ilu rēmēnû*, the invocation ^d*Marduk bēlu rabû* of l. 10 is rendered identical with the parallel invocation ^d*Marduk bēlu rabû* of l. 22;²⁵ by the replacement of *kīma* with *ēma*, the first (13) and last (21) lines of the core

²⁴ Subjunctive and first-person verb forms.

²⁵ I cannot exclude the possibility that the shorter form is due to haplography: . . . GAL<-ú/u DINGIR réme/re-mē-nu>-ú/u. The original, longer form of the line may derive from a prayer which begins with the invocation ^d*Marduk bēlu rabû ilu rēmēnû*. Note that a Marduk *šuilla* with this opening line is attested in all its occurrences immediately after our *šuilla* (cf. Kunstmann, *Gebetschwörung*, 95, no. 8; Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 397, no. 18); in view of the observation made below that l. 10 is part of a written equivalent of a "presentation scene," see also the inscribed prayer cited below, n. 34.

prayer are rendered even more alike (*ēma uṣammaru . . . ēma aqabbū . . .*).

But however welcome such supporting testimony is, we need not rely on it, for the demonstration of concentric symmetry here is simple enough. If the text is unfolded from its outer edge inward and corresponding lines are placed alongside each other, corresponding lines are seen to be essentially identical in meaning and structure, and to parallel each other and form segments of the same circle.

13:21	<i>ēma uṣammaru</i>	:	<i>amāt aqabbū ēma</i>
	<i>lukšud</i>		(← <i>kīma</i>) <i>aqabbū lū</i>
			<i>magrat</i>
14–15:20	<i>šuškin kittu ina</i>	:	<i>šurkamma qabā</i>
	<i>pīya, šubši amāt</i>		<i>šemā u magāru</i> ²⁶
	<i>damiqti ina</i>		
	<i>libbiya</i>		
16:19	<i>tīru u nanzāzu</i>	:	<i>ilu mušallimu idāya/</i>
	<i>liqbū damiqti</i>		<i>ina idīya lū kayān</i>
17:18	<i>ilī lizziz ina imniya</i>	:	<i>ištart lizziz ina</i>
			<i>šumēliya</i>

An outer ring (13:21)²⁷ encircles an inner ring (14–15:20) which in turn encircles a chiasmic staircase quatrain (16–19).²⁸ In ll. 13:21, the petitioner himself

is the actor; in ll. 14–15:20, he shares the role of actor; in ll. 16–19, the role of actor is assumed by divine guardians. Ll. 17–18 form the actual center. Each line is more nearly identical with the other than are any other two adjoining or concentrically balanced lines. Jointly they share features with the two surrounding lines. *lizziz* of ll. 17–18 both draws on the same root as *nanzāzu* of l. 16 and concretizes and specifies the general and non-transitive *lū kayān* of l. 19. Ll. 16–19 are drawn together by these shared features and by the studied contrast of single members in ll. 17–18 with groups of two in ll. 16 and 19. Ll. 17–18 have single subjects and single indirect/locative objects, while l. 16 has two subjects and l. 19 has a dual indirect/locative object:

<i>tīru u nanzāzu</i>		<i>liqbū damiqti</i>
<i>ilī</i>	<i>lizziz ina imniya</i>	
<i>ištart</i>	<i>lizziz ina šumēliya</i>	
<i>ilu mušallimu</i>	<i>ina idīya</i>	<i>lū kayān</i>
	<i>[idāya]</i>	

Ll. 17–18 separate entities which appear in groups of two in ll. 16 and 19: *ilī* and *ištart* (17–18) individualize (and define the divine nature of²⁹) the preceding *tīru u nanzāzu* (16), and *ina imniya* and *ina šumēliya* (17–18) split *idāya* (19) into its two component parts. By associating each of the “sides” with a single god, the subsequent joining of the two sides in the dual *idāya* then allows and renders credible the merging of the individual *ilu* and *ištartu* into the group concept *ilu mušallimu* in a picture which would be spatially impossible—*ilu mušallimu idāya lū kayān*—were the speaker (and the modern reader) not caught up in the transformation. Fused together in this way, ll. 16–19

²⁶ Note that all finite verb forms in ll. 14–15 and 20 begin with /š/: *šuškin*, *šubši*, *šurkamma*.

²⁷ Various translators (Landsberger, *Textbuch*¹, 102 and *Textbuch*², 308; von Soden, *SAHG*, 298; Seux, *Hymnes*, 291; and Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 348) separate l. 13 from l. 14 and connect it to l. 12. However, the concentric structure of ll. 13–21, the parallelism of ll. 13 and 21, the fact that l. 12 constitutes a promise and forms a proper ending of the statement ll. 10–12, and the parallelism of ll. 12 and 24 all indicate that l. 13 is joined to l. 14ff. Furthermore, an occurrence such as Ebeling, *AGH*, 62:37a does not contradict—rather it seems to confirm—this conclusion. This *Ištar šuilla* (*AGH*, 60–63) also contains a line identical with our l. 21: 34 (...) 37a: *amāt aqabbū kīma aqabbū lū magrat* (...) *ēma uṣammaru lukšud*. The composer of this *šuilla* has reversed the order of lines identical with the opening and closing lines of our core prayer. This reversal indicates, I believe, that ll. 13 and 21 belong together and form a single circle and that the circle may be rotated 180°. This *Ištar šuilla* also contains promise and benediction and displays some affinity with the Marduk *šuilla*.

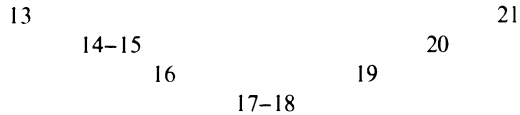
²⁸ The connection of l. 16 with l. 19 and the unity of ll. 16–19 are underscored by such a passage as Ebeling, *AGH*,

22:5–8: *ilī lizziz ina imniya, ištart lizziz ina šumēliya, ilu mušallimu ina idīya lū kayān, tīru manzāzu liqbū damiqti*.

²⁹ A decision whether the *tīru* and *nanzāzu* refer to palace officials or to divine figures is not cut and dry: note, for example, that Landsberger treated them as “untergeordnete Götter” in the first edition of *Textbuch* (102 n. 1), but as “Palastbeamte” in the second edition (308 n. 1). I prefer the former characterization; cf. Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 255 n. 56: “Da dieser Wunsch [*i.e.*, *tīru u nanzāzu liqbū damiqti*] jeweils neben Bitten steht, die sich auf ‘Schutzgeister’ beziehen . . . , hat man vermutet, *tīru* und *nanzāzu* seien hier ebenfalls der Kategorie der Schutzgottheiten zuzurechnen. . . . Wenn das zutrifft, wäre hier das Modell des königlichen Hofstaates auf die Welt der Götter übertragen.”

form a scene of divine guardians surrounding a petitioner on all sides.³⁰

The core prayer may be diagrammed as follows:



This analysis of ll. 13-21 is confirmed by the grammatical structure of the segment. Note especially that every line contains a form of the "volitive" mood; the concentric structure finds expression in the pattern of distribution of precatives and imperatives.

13:21	lukšud	:	lū magrat	precative lu-/lū
14-15:20	šuškin, šubši	:	šurkamma	imperative
16:19	liqbū	:	lū kayān	precative li-/lū
17:18	lizziz	:	lizziz	precative li- ³¹

13 <i>liprus</i>	lū parsat 21 ³²
14-15 <i>purus</i>	purus 20
16 <i>liprus</i>	lū parrās 19
17 <i>liprus</i> <i>liprus</i> 18	

The use of the techniques of ring composition and hysteron proteron result in the creation of a concentrically symmetrical form. Circles are balanced in an inverted order around a still point, and our attention is directed first inward toward the center and then back to the border (13:21) and beyond, to lines 10-12 and 22-24. Around the prayer, ll. 10-12 and 22-24 form a further circle. This outer frame accentuates the concentric structure of the core prayer. It also changes the meaning of the prayer for success and itself re-

ceives a definite setting. In ll. 10-12 and 22-24, a suppliant petitions Marduk for the gift of life. In this setting, the core prayer is transformed into a request for the kind of assistance, skills, and reception that the suppliant imagines he needs to present his petition effectively and to be granted whatever he asks for; a prayer for mundane success becomes a prayer that prepares the suppliant for a successful audience with Marduk. What previously only possessed scenic coherence now possesses dramatic coherence. From being a snapshot, the core prayer is transformed into a story, a description of movement toward a journey's end. The meeting of petitioner and god is that end, and this meeting takes the form of the petitioner's address to Marduk in ll. 10-12 and 22-24.

By joining together 1) scenes of meeting and addressing Marduk (10-12 : 22-24) with 2) those of preparation and introduction (13-21), the composer creates a scene comparable to the "presentation scene"³³ so often represented on cylinder seals, and it is hardly a coincidence that the most common and basic wish expressed in prayers engraved on Cassite seals is the wish for a long life.³⁴ We now have a scene with a frame and an apex. The frame—10-12 : 22-24—represents both culmination and context, and the apex—16-19—represents the point from which the action moves. The petitioner asks that protective, minor gods accompany him and speak well of him to the god (16-19), that he himself be granted the ability of being able to address the god convincingly (14-15 : 20), and that whatever he requests from the god be granted him (13:21). Standing before Marduk and surrounded by his gods, he then presents his petition (10-12 : 22-24): he addresses Marduk respectfully, as a loyal subject addresses his overlord (10:22a); he asks Marduk to grant him the boon of life (11:22b-23); and he declares his personal allegiance to Marduk and his desire to continue serving the god faithfully (12:24).

Minor gods give way to the great god; intimacy with interceding guardians is replaced by the feeling

³⁰ Note that a verbal strand seems to run through our passage; . . . *kittu* (14) . . . *amāt damiqti* (15) . . . *liqbū damiqti* (16) . . . *kayān* (19) . . . *qabā* (20) . . . *amāt aqabbū* . . . *aqabbū* (21) . . .

³¹ For other grammatical features that are shared by corresponding lines, note 13:21: conjunction + 1st pers. subjunctive verb form and 17:18: preposition + noun + 1 sing. poss. suff.

³² Note the gradual loosening of grammatical structure: *lu* . . . *li* . . . *li* . . . *li* . . . *lū* + masc. absol. . . . *lū* + fem. absol. It almost appears as if each side is building up one difference: 17-13: *u* (*li* → *lu*), 18-21: independent form (*li* → *lū* + predicative stative); the segment would thus form a circle that begins and ends with *lu*-/lū + (13/21).

³³ Cf. the characterization of this scene by H. A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, 166.

³⁴ Cf. H. Limet, *Les légendes des sceaux cassites*, 46; furthermore, compare ll. 10-12 with such inscribed prayers as Limet, *Légendes*, 83, no. 6.5. (As an aside, note that *a-mi-ri* of 95, no. 7.9:2 does not refer back to Marduk; it is the subject of the following *liqbi*: "May the one who beholds me speak well of me.")

of majesty and the call to praise that Marduk inspires. The suppliant has drawn near to Marduk and asked for life. We witness the direct meeting of man and god. But now we have reached the introductory hymn (1–9) and concluding benediction (25–27) and the god disengages and draws away. The conflict between divine involvement and separateness is recognized and resolved. The distancing allows man and god to retain their separate identities and thus preserves the possibility of an ongoing relationship. However much Marduk cares for man, he is finally a member of a different community. At the moment of direct contact, the text looks outward and beyond the world of man and reasserts the god's divine nature.

The first-person voice of the suppliant is silenced. The introduction and conclusion present Marduk's withdrawal from man and his reentry into the world of the gods. Human praise gives way to divine praise in hymn and benediction. The praise of the individual man in ll. 10–12 is replaced with that of mankind in general. Marduk then draws back from caring for and being praised by men everywhere (7–9) and turns first to his cities Borsippa and Babylon (4–6) and returns finally to his family and home in Eridu (1–3). Care of the god and the joy man feels in his service (22–24) are replaced by the joy Marduk feels when he returns to his own world and receives the greeting and praise of Enlil and Ea, the gods of the heaven and the abyss (25), of the gods of the universe (26), and of the great gods (27).

Forming the outer ring, hymn and benediction, though internally concentric, stand in parallel symmetry to each other, a symmetry best exemplified by shared words:³⁵

- 1–3 || 25 ^dMarduk...*murīš E^oengura* (3); ...^dEa
 lirīška (25)
4–6 || 26³⁶
7–9 || 27 *šumka...ina pī nišī tāb* (9); *ilū rabātu lib-*
 baka liṭibbū (27)³⁷

³⁵ What looks like a standard benediction is only one variation among many (see Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 336f.); if it is granted that intention and choice played some part in the formulation, then the connections between hymn and benediction are all the more striking.

³⁶ The parallelism of ll. 4–6 and 26 is posited for systematic reasons; I am unable to isolate specific points of contact between ll. 4–6 and 26.

³⁷ Cf. ll. 14–15: ... *ina pīya*, ... *ina libbiya*.

Moving from the center, we have made our way to the outer edge of the composition. The following diagram sets out in schematic form the structure of the text and may serve to summarize and conclude this last portion of our exposition:

			lines
	I		1–3
Hymn	A 2		4–6
	3		7–9
		1	10
Meeting with Marduk	B 2		11
	3		12
		1	13
		2	14–15
		3	16
Preparation for meeting	C X		17–18
	3'		19
	2'		20
	1'		21
		1'	22a
Meeting with Marduk	B' 2'		22b–23
	3'		24
		1'	25
Benediction	A' 2'		26
	3'		27

The way we chose to study the Marduk šuilla was determined, in the first instance, by several difficulties which we encountered in the text itself, and this approach has served us well. But there is more than one way of reading a text, and much has also been left unsaid. Our composition, as we have noted, has a form different from most other šuillas. Precisely because we have eschewed historical questions and modes of inquiry and have treated the composition as an independent creation, it is necessary to remark at this point that our study also suggests that the composition did not stand in isolation. Some of the compositional features that characterize our text and distinguish it from other šuillas are also found in various degrees of development in prayers to other members of Marduk's circle.³⁸ The composition, moreover, is genetically related to the Nabû šuilla *BMS* 22: 1–29.³⁹ The Marduk šuilla was composed, I should guess, sometime before the reign of Adad-

³⁸ Cf. Ebeling, *AGH*, 60ff.; 68ff.; 106ff.

³⁹ See Kunstmann, *Gebetsbeschwörung*, 99 s. Nabû 2: "Stilistisch auf das engste verwandt mit dem Gebete Marduk 2." For a new edition, see Mayer, *Untersuchungen*, 473–75.

apla-iddina; it appears to have been a product of a theological and literary movement that centered around the figure of Marduk. Such questions, though, are best left for another occasion; here, we must be

satisfied with having recovered an aspect of the form and a fragment of the meaning of a prayer.*

* I have enjoyed conversations with M. Brettler, S. Kaufman, W. L. Moran, and P. Stark on various aspects of the text.